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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 000906

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [YM](#) [DOMESTIC](#) [POLITICS](#) [COUNTER TERRORISM](#)

SUBJECT: GRENADE ATTACKS IN SANAA PERSIST AMID SAADA FIGHTING

REF: A. SANAA 697

[B](#). SANAA 726

[C](#). IIR 6906011405

Classified By: DCM Nabeel Khoury for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary. Amidst reports of escalating fighting in Saada, six grenade attacks against military personnel were reported in downtown Sanaa in the past ten days. Accounts of the attacks, which are sporadic and sometimes conflicting, indicate that this violence is Saada related, perpetrated by members or supporters of al-Houthi's "Believing Youth" movement. End Summary.

Incident Reports

[1](#)2. (C) One officer and two soldiers were reportedly injured on the evening of April 9 in the Bab al-Yemen/Old City area of Sanaa when a grenade was tossed into a passing Airforce vehicle. According to local journalist Hamoud Munasser, police forces immediately swept the area and made several arrests. Speculation was rife all week that it, and previous attacks (ref C), are related to the renewal of bloody fighting between ROYG forces and al-Houthi insurgents in the northern Saada area. (refs A and B). ROYG officials at first denied but now confirmed to senior emboffs that the attacks are indeed related to Saada fighting. Yemen Times reporter, Mohammed al-Qadi, and UAE based Al-Bayan newspaper correspondent Mohammed Ghorbani, both told Poloff that only one person was injured in the most recent attack, and claimed the target of the grenade was the home, and not the vehicle, of a ranking Airforce officer. On April 11, Raynews.net, the internet news service of the small leftist Rabita party, quoted a Ministry of Interior official denying that the officer, General Mustafa Zayed, was injured at all.

[1](#)3. (C) Post has been to unable confirm reports of another grenade attack on a ROYG military vehicle on April 10, rumored to have occurred in the Haddah area of Sanaa. The latest confirmed incident on April 9 comes after a series of similar attacks beginning March 29 when a grenade was tossed into a passing ROYG military vehicle at the Bab al-Salam gate in the Bab-al Yemen/Old City area. According to local press the target of this attack was an Army commander in charge of Procurement. The media reported that the commander was injured and his deputy killed in the attack. Oddly, OMC Chief met with the same commander days after the attack, who insisted his deputy was not only fine but in Cairo with his family.

[1](#)4. (C) Another grenade attack against the military took place on April 5 in front of the Ministry of Defense in Central Sanaa. The attack occurred at around noon when a man dressed in the garb of al-Houthi's "Believing Youth" threw a grenade from his vehicle into a military transport truck carrying several soldiers. The grenade, which was thrown back out of the truck, exploded on the sidewalk causing minor injuries. A Police car that gave chase eventually lost the suspect vehicle. (Ref. C).

Believing Youth Likely Suspects

[1](#)5. (C) Despite ROYG efforts to play down the situation in their public statements, press circles almost unanimously concur that al-Houthi followers are behind the attacks. The targeting of the military in Sanaa in retribution for the ongoing battle between security forces and al-Houthi insurgents in Saada, implies the "Believing Youth" have adopted new terrorist-like tactics and that the conflict has spread beyond the area of military engagement in the north. A journalist close to the Embassy confided that his source within the al-Houthi movement in Saada called and confirmed that the Believing Youth were responsible for the string of attacks in the capital city and that they were aimed at the ROYG security forces and military. The source also told the journalist that there are no plans to attack diplomats or other installations. Senior ROYG officials on the other hand tell us they are now convinced these attacks are al-Houthi related and point out the terrorist nature of the movement and its aims, which they claim are virulently anti-American. Krajiski